

Investing in Washington's kids: ensuring a better future

Representative Joe McDermott—34th Legislative District

LAP

The Learning Assistance Program provides state funding for students in need of additional assistance. In the past the state allocated funds based on test scores, but when test scores improved, schools lost funding. However, without the needed help, students' test scores declined again, creating a see-saw of rising and falling test scores. The Legislature passed, and Governor Gregoire signed, Representative McDermott's bill to allocate LAP funding entirely on poverty, as there is a high correlation between student performance and family income.

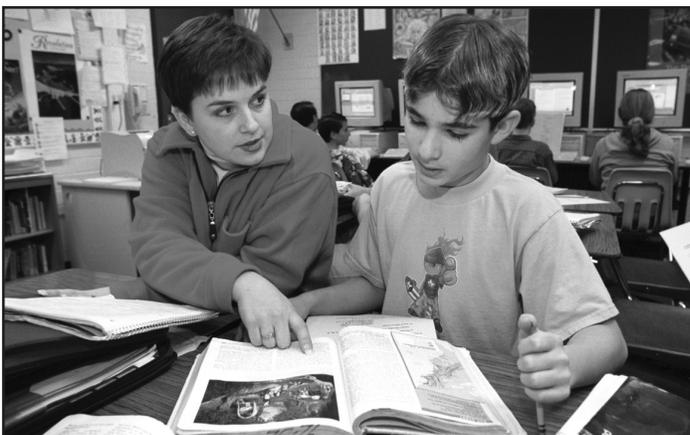
Furthermore, the new budget invests \$25 million in new money in the LAP program. This guarantees that not only will no school district lose funds when the formula changes, but as we bring all students to standards for graduation, more assistance is available. Both the change in the funding formula and increased investment in LAP improve an already successful program.



Initiatives 728 & 732

In 2000 voters overwhelmingly approved two education initiatives. Budget surpluses and reserves were to have funded I-728, while I-732 identified no funding. When the economy turned, so did the state's ability to make these investments.

This year the Legislature funded the class size reduction initiative (I-728) out of the newly created Education Legacy Trust, and the teacher cost-of-living-allowance (COLA) initiative, (I-732) from the General Fund. Funding these initiatives provides needed resources for our students and delivers on a promise with the people of Washington.



Governing K-12 Education

The Legislature made significant improvements in the accountability and efficiency of K-12 governance. With their substantial work done, the Academic Achievements and Accountability Commission (the "A+ Commission") ceases to exist, with their remaining duties transferred to the State Board of Education (SBE). The Legislature reconstitutes the SBE to be made up of 7 members appointed by the Governor, 5 members elected by school board members, and the Superintendent of Public Instruction and a private school representative.

The legislation also makes the Professional Educators Standards Board autonomous from the SBE in their responsibility for teacher preparation and certification. Extensive changes in school governance will improve accountability and focus our attention on student achievement.

School Construction

The Capital Budget allocates \$619 million for much-needed school construction. This is a record-breaking level of investment in local schools.

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Special Education

Recognizing existing and growing needs, the budget we adopted invests \$29 million more in special education over the next two years. This addresses costs that school districts find themselves stretched to cover.

School Breakfasts

Breakfast proves the most important meal of the day – when children’s nutritional needs are met, they’re more attentive in class, and have better attendance and fewer disciplinary problems. That’s why the Legislature passed McDermott’s bill requiring school districts that provide lunch programs and that have a high concentration of students in poverty to also provide breakfast. This bill ensures that more than 5700 students will get a free breakfast every school day.

Dear Educator,

Welcome to the new school year! As your State Representative and a member of the House Education Committee, I want to give you some brief information about the Legislature’s accomplishments in education earlier this year.

Please never hesitate to contact me about an education issue or anything of importance to you. When our Session begins again in January we will be looking at many issues, including graduation requirements. I welcome your thoughts.

Lastly, thank you for your work in our schools and classrooms. As the son of educators, I know the work you invest in our students. Thank you for your commitment.

Yours,

Joe McDermott • State Representative



Students from Lafayette Elementary School visited with Rep. Eileen Cody and Rep. Joe McDermott, who attended Lafayette, at the capitol campus early in the session

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